Poetry Series

Joe Howell
- poems -

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I am just a man trying to write. Sometimes I find the words, sometimes I don't.
The Lady In The Car

The Lady in the Car
It was snowing really hard
the night I was forced to leave home.

I walked to the main road, and started walking towards town
To overcome with anger to know where to go.

Out of the snowflakes came a car.
I could not believe it,
when it stopped.

Inside was a little old lady.
I had no idea why she would be driving in the snow, late at night.

She opened the door and told me to get in. The heat in side warmed me to my toes.

She asked only where she could take me, not what was I doing out on such a night.

She took me to the door of a friend who took me in.

It took me several years to see her wings.

Joe Howell
Day You Lied

Darkness washes over me, like the evening tide
No one lying beside my-side.

Waves of pain, hurt from where you left
it was the evening that i cried.

The sand was made of flesh
for a time we walked, with hearts tied.

However, the flesh renewed
leaving me with with blackness died.

Names written is grains of sand
washed away, before love abide.

Darkness washed over me the day you lied.

Joe Howell
Firestarter

She carried in her heart,
the fire to start
another affair

Once burnt, don't
play with matches
you and him

He took the fire
left a burnt out
flame

Now the firestarter
watches
from the cold

Joe Howell
Walking Tears

I have spilled tears upon blood stained ground..
Smelled the stench
of burning flesh

Walked mountains
and
Valleys
Hunting those who can't be seen.

Left the war
to
return
home-to it.

For I have found
the worst wounds
can't be seen.

Joe Howell
Snowflakes

Filigree
snowflakes
cover summer's worn carpet
yellow and orange leaves.

I desire August's heat
a Texas Moon

Joe Howell
Cold Wind

Hot Summer Day-
heats up everything.

Except this cold wind
through my blood.

Joe Howell
It's a silent time, when i pack it all in,
call it a night, walking to my bed
and giving thanks for living another day

i take pride in small things, that some call nuts
like im all-ways early for work, that's just me
stay late if i need to, to get everything
lined up for the next person, come this way

don't own a cell phone, i don't need to talk
while i drive, and if you need me, im useally
in the same place i was yesterday, at this time

some may call it bore-ing, going 40 where
thats the speed limit, i guess that why they pass
me, with fingers waving in the air
but we end up at the same red light

im just a simple man, caught up in a
multi directional latatude of light

Joe Howell
This Ache

This ache, is more then tears,  
falling into emptyness  
is more then that invisable hand  
that graps my heart, catches my breath  

This ache is waking up in the morning,  
knowing that you will not get to share it  
breath the fresh air, nor see the purple sky  
feel cool rain on warm skin, smell city streets  

This ache, is waking up from a dead sleep,  
seeing your face  
smelling your smell  
dreaming that you were here  

Joe Howell
What The Medic Said

Blood was mixed with pieces of skin and torn metal.
Yet the sky was still blue the day 18 were blown away.

It was sometime between Aug and Sept; funny how you can't remember stuff forty years later.

I remember that it was morning one of our guys had fallen asleep next to a bouncing betty, and I was on watch while everyone slept.

We had been up for three days & three nights, and I was so tired i couldn't sleep. So i stood watch. No nightmares that night, just quite and a blood red sunrise.

Joe Howell
The army taught me,
back in 70
That some people needed my help
back in Viet Nam
So they trained me to kill
back at Fort Sill
Trained me to jump from a plane
back at Fort Benning
Said OK, now go kill some
back at Chu Lai
Killed a lot, both day and night
back at LZ FAt City
They sent me home, after a year
back to the 'World'
Tried to forget all about the war
back at the bar
Had a lot of trouble keep a job
back at the salt mill
Held a lot of anger
back of my mind
Went to counceling
Back at the VA
Learned I needed pills
Back from the pharmacy
Now Im in a daze
back in my mind
And where was my bed made?
back in Viet Nam

Joe Howell
Clouds Of The Mind

This darkness in my heart

will it cloud out the Sun

that you claim to be Yours?

Joe Howell
Nothing By Night

We went down that ole country road
with the window's rolled down
and my sleeves rolled up
Looking for a cool place to play

We found a creek,
by a turn in the road
no one for miles
we were all alone

And there it stopped, my mind left me
sitting hot and dry.
I saw the moon, the clouds at night
but it did nothing, I could not write

Took a walk out by the shed
stood by the old oak tree
rubbed my rabbit's foot
but nothing would enter my head

Joe Howell
Round Stones And Black Ink

Round Stones and Black Ink

Take this mask that I wear
Remove the pain within
Speak soft words
Whisper if you will

Take this bottle from my hands
Remove the pain within
Let me drink my past
and sleep with the dead

Take this dagger in my chest
Remove the pain with in
Let it cut the hate and anger
that bears both sides

Take this rose from my garden
Remove the pain within
let the thorns be removed
and the petals made into ink.

Joe Howell
Her family was always a few dollars below
The poverty level. And no matter how hard her Dad
Worked, they could not get ahead.

Every school year she received three things, a new dress, under clothes and a
new pair of shoes.
Because the shoes had to last the year, they were
what other children called 'Bro-gans'.

When she was 16 she met Sammy.
Wow it was like a light shining into her life.
She knew that some day they would marry.

For Christmas that year Sammy gave her a very special
Present. A pair of Red shoes.
They were beautiful.
She felt like Dorothy dancing in OZ.

When Sammy turned 18 he told her that he had to go fight for his country.

There was a war in Vietnam, and he felt that he had to go.

The day before he left, he had a dozen white roses delivered
To her home. It was the first flowers that she had ever received.

The Good-By was awful, and she felt pain in her heart.
Three months later a man came to visit Sammy's parents.

It was the Worst of News.
It was the Last of Time.
It was like Last Night,
and
Sammy's still 18.

Joe Howell
Red & White

She has a thing for red shoes and White roses.

She owns thirty three pair, all red.

Has white roses delevered once a week
I allways suspected that someone had once given her a dozen.

Maybe before she dies,
I will.

Joe Howell
Southern Sunday

Light green eyes that light up with a smile
Husky voice, that speaks soft -
sensual massage the neck and shoulders
listening to soft music
kissing from the soul
holding you in my arms
looking into your eyes
whispering your name upon the sky
taking you in the rain
being next to you for the sunrise
making coffee
washing dishes
making the bed
messing it up again
walking hand in hand
sitting next to a brook
picnic lunch
wine & cheese
country roads
starlit sky
falling asleep in your arms
whispering Secrets
making love with the lights on.

Joe Howell
Sammy's 18

Sammy was 18 when he was drafted into the United States Army.
Country roads, divided by pine trees led towards his demise

Sammy was a curly haired rod of pure energy that loved Mom as much as apple pie
He made it to The DMZ, then on to Hamburger Hill
They shipped his body home covered with a flag

His room is the same as he left it,
and it's been 30 years,
but to Sammy's Mom
Sammy's still 18

Joe Howell
Thinking Thoughts, I Think

Thinking thoughts, I think
------------------------
thinking thoughts that can not be said
visions of weather clouds, clouds my head

whispering words that can not be heard
positions, left & right of absurd.

one to never walk on the cracks
cover me while I watch your back

two for one on friday night
take the car, in case we fight

I have been told by some -'Im not right'
maybe my bulb is not so bright

taking words two by two
is a fad for so few

im thinking thoughts that can not be said

Joe Howell
Dr's Waiting Room

Silver grey hair
wrinkles like hiways on a map
a floral pattern on her dress
must have been made in 1932
she sat waiting

Silver white hair
wrinkles like ditches by the roadway
white t-shirt, blue suspenders-no belt
tan slacks
he sat waiting, with her

She reached over
kissed his cheek
he held her hand...
in their ninety's....
young lovers

Joe Howell
Cafe Of Broken Dreams

She worked in confortable shoes
with thick soles, polished in hearts
of lovers that beg not to be forgoten

At my table I sat with coffee
three day growth of whiskers
a full collection of anger filled words

A skinny kid with acne scared skin
plunging stolen quarters into a
juke box full of yesterday's songs

And the waitress smiled and winked
seeing my nerves lying on the table...
knew her power over me
At the Cafe of Broken Dreams

Joe Howell
W & P

She sits before the fire
of want and passion
thinking that the two are the same

wanting the passion
to burn inside of her

not knowing that the fire
of want will burn
her soul,

where no
passion
is.

Joe Howell
A Glass Of Wine

A glass of wine, and a dozen tears
await me at the end of the day
Now that the pot is broken
life made out of clay

The day you walked out
life stopped to breathe
now I have a glass of wine
a dozen tears, to stay with me

Joe Howell
Despire

My setting sun is sinking slow
I have questions, on how to go

No book I have read
gave advice on what you said

Do I just pick the rose,
kick the can, with my toes

Let me see the light
in this darkness of night

shall I go or shall I stay
or save it for another day

does death look better in the day
covered up in darkness's play

O death where is thy sting
does love take to wing

this day I go forth to the well
the end of this internal hell

Joe Howell
The Toy Not Given

At the age of 5 I had to go live in an Orphan's home. Seems that Mother didn't want us kids, after Daddy died.

The children there were cruel to strangers, and I was small for my age. People came, looking for kids of their own

Try you out, like a used car. If they didn't like you, then they brought you back. seem like I got brought back a lot.

That first year at Christmas time, they gave away presents(one per child) according to age. I was to get a plastic machine gun..Boy I could not wait.

I stood in line, with lots of ideas of how I would be an out-law, or marshel. Shucks I could be any one. Then I got to the end of the line.

'You are too small', said the man. Here take this. A bag of fruit. And that is how the toy, was never given.

Joe Howell
Sounds Of Silence

Hello darkness, my old friend,
I've come to talk with you again,
Because a vision softly creeping,
Left it's seeds while I was sleeping,

Silence shouted out of the night.
When morter rounds came raining, washing death.
Silence spoke in words of wounded men, waiting for a chopper.
When hillsides and rice patties lit up the night, Napalm spoke.

Christmas was observed with a cease fire
except for those that
knew not Christ's birthday.
Rifle fire with tracers burning red.

Silence shattered by screaming. waking up at night.
Feeling like the next round will be on me.

And the signs said, the words of the prophets
Are written on the subway walls
And tenement halls.
And whisper'd in the sounds of silence

Joe Howell
Evening In Paris

The sun, a glass marble shines on innocense.
I lie in short grass, looking into the future.

The moon- a shiny biscuit covers the clouds.
And midnight bleeds into childhood dreams..

The watch hands turn into a foreign country.
The war passed, I standown in rags.

Looking thru the back glass of a Rambler Station Wagon.
Childhood dreams escape as the dust.
I smell Evening in Paris.

The wrinkles in skin and shirt pressed by time.
I lie in short grass, looking into the past.

Joe Howell
Mistress Of The Mind

Mistress of the mind, she
chapped my lips.
In quite conversation,
lights on low.

Two silloutes on a window shade,
become one, in ruby moonlight.
Sensation's slaves.
Sleep deprived.
Cuddled, under lavander.

Sunshine, sleeping, sensations
Mistress of the mind.
Mystery Lady..
You.

Joe Howell
Revival

The other Sunday, I was feeling low,
felt like some where there was more for me.
I knew of a revival, going on at a church
down the road. So I drove down to lift up my soul.

The preacher, he was New, I could tell.
It was the way he kept looking at his Bible,
checking to make sure he had read it right.

Then half an hour later, I noticed he had
a cell phone on his belt. I said to my
self, who would call him, more important then
God, and he wouldn't use a phone.

Joe Howell
Who I Am

I walk in King's palaces,
hold my head up high.
Have dinner with Presidents,
and heads of Countries.
Visit with nobles & gentry.

I was with Napoleon, at Waterloo.
Saw Custer fight at the Big Horn.
Edison saw my in a new light.

Fight with eminies twice my size,
most have no chance, to survive.
Yet, most battles, I stay immobile.

You may see me Summer, Winter, Spring & Fall
Might visit daily, yet not at all.
Most people fear me.

I am spider, I spin where I will.

Joe Howell
Old Film

I bought a used camera, from ebay.

I have been thinking of some pictures to take.  
How about the time we spent at that brook, back in 74.  
Or beside that ole willow tree.  
There was the time we spent holding hands while watching movies, at the drive in.

I can see it plain as day, the smile on your face, the first Christmas, when we were so poor, that you made mine from cloth, and yours was a bible.

Yes I could take several rolls, just of that.  
Remeber that green oldsmobile?  
I could take another pic, of the baby, sitting on the hood.  
Her and that big wheel, that was ridden for so many miles.  
Halloween night, when she was so sick, she had to go home.  
Yes, I would need a flash.

Flash-
Those pictures, have allready been developed.

Joe Howell
Tomorrows Eye

If we could see with tomorrows eye,
We might find an alternate route

One less glaring, or dry from the harsh winds running rampant
Lined with the oaks from all the days before now,

Aged, with their wisdom of what has passed 'round their roots,
where all yesterdays tears have nourished their foundations,

and turned their leaves crimson and gold,
Come autumn's fall from the sun.

Stars falling in harmoney with
hearbeats, buding forth in awe.

Blue flowers, buding as I speak your name
listening in awe, and amazement.

Whispers of love and bright mornings,
enter into eagar ears, brighting eye tone.

Yet one wanders -if in another life
this way we came, seeing with tomorrows eye.

Joe Howell
12 Men

you came to give him a rest
twelve men in black suits
to take him to give him a rest
to be buried in his best

words can't say, what the heart feels
how much pain can it take, before it breaks
and what about the happiness we will miss
he brought it with him, coming thru the door

tears won't water the flowers he planted
and sunrise will be late
for it to slow, to say good by
it will not shine as bright

upon a stone, bearing his name
the word loved will be etched
and in our hearts, a hole grows
larger

Joe Howell
Childhood Dreams

Sunlight peeps thru closed curtains
like a sleepy child, nodding in - out
yet you sleep. the wave of pre-dawn
passion, renaming lost childhood dreams

I often wonder about some childhood friend,
how at the time we were pardners, for life
what has become of him? is he sitting
somewhere with a cup of coffee?

I touch your skin, to gently introduce you
to a new day, and you with a smile, say
'I was just dreaming about you' thus
leaving my thoughts of childhood friends

Joe Howell
Circle Of Gold

wayward words spilling from heated lips
'you did's' floating in and out
'but if', pushing in every now and then
why not just pack up and leave

after the papers, what comes now?
where to start from zero, at forty
is there a supermarket of flesh
where one can pick, the best, throw the spoils to the wind?

the thing that stays with me is the
ring on the left hand
now it's just an empty circle of gold

Joe Howell
These Men I Call Brothers

'We few. We happy few. We Band of Brothers. For those who shed their blood with us today shall always be our Brothers'
'William Shakespeare'

fought beside me in life's hell
stood when others fell

saw pain in rain- in monsoon
not enough to make a platoon

some led the way
on a different day

proud solders we stood
die for each other we would

metals won, but we don't wear
not really that we don't care

the 'welcome home' that we desired
has closed shop and retired

we meet once a year
each one -i hold dear

the road is long, filled with tears
the sun has sat on our fears

we sit, talk about spent lead
never forgetting the dead

next year, again we will meet
this band of brothers -so elite

Joe Howell
Raindropp Pearls

Raindropp pearls, carress your skin
this hot June day, with sunshine
taking a break, to go play
rain clouds arrive in bouquets of nines

skin tanned and hot, enjoy the shower,
to cool off we lay on the grass
while in the break, some relief, we feel
lemonaide & ice, in a pink glass

touching, kissing, holding hands
we walk, with heads togeth
enjoying the day? -you wisper, my way
raindropp pearls falling, like little feathers

Joe Howell
The Death Bird

friends found in an old photo album
so young, full of life, I remember
when the death bird sang, calling sorrow
calling your name

Uncle Dave was a war hero, got lots metals
for bravery, and saving a bunch of men
then the death bird sang, took him home
calling his name

My brother in law, just turned 21
bought a new car, enjoyed his job
working with doctors in the operating room
when the death bird sang

I'm sitting here thinking that, since you're gone
I wish to hear that death bird sing

Joe Howell
Wash Day

three shiney pennies,
a nickle and a dime
found in a pant's pocket

a hidden treasure to a lad
who had no home for so long
a kings fortune, his to keep

wednesday was wash day, over
an outside fireplace, a washpot
and the washboard, to scrub

as a child i got to check all
the pockets, and make claim
to riches, remembered later, in age

Joe Howell
he stood six feet tall
digest man i had ever seen
at age seven, he came into my life
picked me up and put me in a wheelbaro
for a ride, the first time i saw him
gave me a ride into his heart, also

he took me hunting, fishing too
taught me that things are still there
in the dark, you just can't see them
smartest man i ever knew, never went to
school, learned everything on his own

taught me to stand on my own feet, and
that i could cry if i need to, showed
me the way thru a cave when i was ten
proved to me that i could stand, after i
fell a few times.

told me that time would go by fast
when i got old- i thought he was nuts
untill a few years ago, just the
last week. Now i know, he was
for me.

Joe Howell
This Light
reflected in your eyes,

Burns into my soul

Rebounds to errupt into words
Spoken In love

Wrapped in Teardrops

Joe Howell
Mondays Mumble

Wednesday's wind blows fire & rain
stomps your love, kindles your pain

Monday's madness makes mayhems glow
steals hours, cripples minutes, oh so slow

Tuesday's Twilight shows shadows silhouettes
starched sheets -stolen cigarettes

Friday's Freaks shout & gore
men /women, coffee whores

Saturday's sting comes in pies
fourteen live, no one dies

Thursday's grace lies in state
love & happiness-soul-mates

Sundays sun shines deep
cold & sin takes a leap

Joe Howell
Texas Sun

in an old Ford pickup
we went looking for antiques
in the Texas dusty streets
of an unnamed western town

we enjoyed the air flowing from
rolled down windows, cool soda
from glass bottles, and grey clouds
blue bonnets covering the sholders

it was a lazy day, stress burned away
as hot peppers drying in the sun
happiness spread to smiles
heart beats of lovers, castanet's

late in the afternoon sun's painted
chapel celing, we stopped by a small
brook, layed on a blanket feeling utopia
watching, wanting, and whispering

Joe Howell
Idaho

Found that ole tune
on the radio today
though of you, it's been
so long-so long

im glad that your just a bad
itch that i don't have to scrach
yesterdays news, with a bad hairdo
you played the wrong hand, you lost

now im doing alright, sleep good
all night, wake fresh and free
while you, are just a bad dream
whose mama called everyday

Heard that ole song on the radio
picked me up and put me in Idaho
picked me up and put me in Idaho

Joe Howell
Hospitables

ey were led by a blue horse
dressed in pink and lavender

surgical steel instrerments to
assist in replacing, wayward bones

a home for those seeking skill
in repairing and reviving the ill

young & old recieving treatment
many leaving, with more then health

in rooms, controled, for necessities
where jerms, take a dive, into anticeptic

heart beats and babies, born into
the best hospitals, and death lives
in the basement, carried out into black

Joe Howell
7-4-70

There was explosions in the air
booms that rocked you to the core
morter rounds and machine gun's
shouting, seeking, whom to destroy

I remember that fourth of July
I was in Viet Nam, and someone
wearing black was gunning for me
I can't remember if I thought
about home or not, but not having
anyone who cared about me,
I don't think I did.

Looking back now, I don't think that
what I did was really anything having
to do with keeping anyone free, Mostly
I just feel kinda left out, missing a year

But I am glad I went, when I was called
and im glad that I live in the US of A
and im glad to stand up, and salute the flag
cause i know i did what i could, after all

Joe Howell
Leaving

don't take my picture today
leave with out it, dont stop
at the city limits and have a smoke
put the car in drive and get on with it

the flowers didn't bloom this may
water wasn't fresh or fall was to late
I will be leaving soon taking the bus
Dallas looks good, know someone there

I had soup for supper, with some bread
David said that he could work on the car
the insurance check will be here soon
and i want to just move on

don't take my picture to day
it's too late for me to stay

Joe Howell
Hoarded Sunshine

somewhere between childhood cries and today's cells
i have opened a place inside, where i hoard sunshine
when the days are cold and words cut
where the dead use their own language, quite,
like fallen trees in winter snow

Joe Howell
Cold Night-Hot Day

snow was blowing a white night
sitting in my car, guarding more then
against the cold, i fought the night

when my relief came, at midnight
what is this? he had no car
temperature reading four degrees

i offer him mine for the night,
just dropp me home-not far,
wake me up when you get off

he refused, said his wife would be by
later with some food, so i left him, in
the cold, winter white

Joe Howell
Words

I'm looking at white paper, lined
Pen in one hand, loaded gun in the other
By the time of dawns gray
Words or blood will spill

Thoughts butterfly thru my mind
Words in abandonment elude
Dictionary and word books confuse
Words tear and rip my gray matter

A simple verse is all I ask
The configuration of letters
Is my Mecca. - May I rest my
Weary head with a metaphor

Sunlight approaches and no
Innuendo for my thirst
In all that is and ever will be
I have yet to receive these
Two words-The end

Joe Howell
Secret Words

words that bend mortal men
creates universal haphazards,
holds seconds in grasps of
meager men that are stove up in
looking glasses and hairpieces

words that poets scream for
searching at midnight,
looking under great oak trees
walking red clay roads, driving convertibles
calling radio stations, needing
social interaction

the drink of bums with PhD’s
doctors that prescribe pain-killers for themselves, liquid
abbreviations and adjectives

They are just words
Written in Braille on the rings of halos

Joe Howell
Standing Soldiers

marble solders lying is oblique
diamondstone wheel to turn
this workman's craft
not enjoyed

granite structors standing in rolls
scrollwork patterns to be
applyed to this
cenotaph

large stones for small souls
small ones to unknownes
magnificent structors
marking deaths
attainment

Joe Howell
Last Exhale

Brown grass, erasing into green
Blacktop highway, rolling two lanes
and standing beside it, for every sinner to see
a wooden cross, standing three foot three

No words are written, no name to tell
who's marrow this is
nor the time of his last exhale

Joe Howell
7 Past Sunrise

the clock stops, it's 7 past sunrise
rain clouds gather in widow's veil
I am studdering your name, missing
you to a North Carolina town

sunday comes, but brings no relief
I find that if I close my eyes I
can see your silhouette, circled in blue
lonleness pounds my door, rings my bell

I wonder if it would not be better
if you found work closer to me
rather then pluck my heart, perpetuity
leaving bones of white nakedness

Joe Howell
Heart Beats

there is a white water rapid  
in my heartbeat for you  
in your presence, it slowes to  
bradycardia of love  

in your arrhythmia, I ride to  
the head waters, feeling elated  
if you pause, i wish to breath  
a breath of adoration  

in our valentine of rhythms  
we are inseparable, beat  
for beat, one united pulse  

Joe Howell
It Is

It's somewhere in your eyes
not a speck of light
nor a darkness, dread
like i know, it is love

it's somewhere in the words you say
not really a tone of voice
nor a dreaded stormy night
like i know, it is love

it's somewhere in your walk
not a cockness, head held high
nor a beat-downness
like i know, it is love

it's somewhere in who you are
my bride for so long
not a house cleaner alone
like i know, its you

Joe Howell
Last Dance

if we could but hear the music
dance that last time again
let me sway into your mind
and hold you with my hand

we could dance till dawn
feet touching the floor
rainbows leaping around us
we would never close the door

if we could hear the music
let it play just for us
everyone looking, watching
us moving in angel's dust

the years have came between us
left it's crippling hold
sunshine always reminds me
my first love, so bold

Joe Howell
Pulp Adiction

I am a simple minded man
learning was by doing
books have their pages
but you are what i want to read

your pages are as much a mystery as
those strange markings on cave walls
your button nose, breathes pulp
that i asperiate on, turning blue

the story line is never the same
some days you project a novella
luring me into wanton reading
of lechery goosebumbs.

i investigate, scarlet seams
and leather bindings,
as smoke & mirror incantations
of flesh and lust

I am mystified as to how to quote
your verse, for it flowes as the
nile- a river heard of, never seen
hopefully i can get to chapter two

Joe Howell
Black Friday

Why, on such a sun-filled day
would i awake, crying?
did the sun not rise, for me
to claim this day, make it into
that which i choose?

Why must emotions run in transparent
veins, returning to the heart and back
to the tears that fell, leaving only
an inner shell, that the outer knows not

I look upward to the sky, but it is black
even with the sun staring at me, smiling
a smirk, - maybe he can read emotions,
let him be someone's else road map
for today, i need rain to cover the tears

Joe Howell
The Cup

the cup was old
stained with years
warming hearts
calming fears

It's not the cup nor the tea
that matters most
but the years of love
between you & me

Joe Howell
When Bells Toll

when bells tolls, lies expire
truth emerges into a right
hate grows into liquid flow
bigotry is swallowed

when bells tolls, i cry for
memories of yesterday's light
that shines no more, except
when i forget, and call your name

when bells tolls, sadness is
a cold shower, awaking corpuscles
and sundown is whispered dread

Joe Howell
the man smiled at the thought
visions of like named souls
scents from long ago
mists of flesh & life
and sunshine in her hair

Joe Howell
Purple Flower

It was just a purple flower
pushing its head out of the
red clay, looking around
seeing clouds arranged in
God's signature

Joe Howell
Oh Death

Oh Death please come my way
do not tarry nor delay

Unplug this machine, breathing for me
hindering my leaving, can't you see?

I heard the nurse, they need this bed
they will move me out, when I'm dead

Take me in your icy hand
lead me over to the promised land

Oh death don't run a way
I can't wait another day

Joe Howell
22 Rifle

It was the summer that i turned 17
I wanted a 22 cal. rifle for my birthday
that was all i thought of, boy i shot a million
invisible rounds at everything from cans
to mountain tigers, being invisible too

The rifle i wanted cost fifty dollars
and money was tight, but i knew
that daddy worked overtime down
at the sawmill, just out of town

When the day of my birth arrived
i was up with the rooster, shouting
to wake him from dreaming of pullets
I had bought a box of ammo the day before

When Dad walked in with a small box,
wrapped in white paper, i was in shock
i tore off the top and saw the words
HOLY BIBLE, i turned four shades of red

That was the day i left home-13 years ago
not to return until his funeral last week
today i have to clean out his desk before i
leave to go home to where i ran before

In the bottom drawer i find that bible
still wrapped in white paper, with the top
tore. I sit and open it when a piece of paper
falls to the floor. when I pick it up i see that it
is a check for fifty dollars,
and signed in
love

Joe Howell